

Council on Aging
Board Meeting
January 10, 2007

Members in Attendance: John Concordia, Marty Green, Paul Keegan, Helen McLaughlin, Tim Swiss, Helene Tanenholtz

Staff in Attendance: Michele Bauwens, Sharon Yager

I. Minutes

The Chairman called the meeting to order at 10:10am. The format of the December meeting minutes was complimented, and it was suggested that this format be used in future. Although they were lengthy, they were comprehensive. There was a suggestion to change the use of "Recommendation" to "To Do" from now on. The November minutes were unanimously accepted.

II. Chairman's Comments

Finance Committee

COA will meet with FinCom on **Saturday, 2/3/07 at 1:15pm in the Selectmen's Room** at Town Hall.

TO DO: The volunteers will call each COA Board member ahead of time to remind them.

Formula Grant

The amount we are to receive from the Formula Grant has been increased by \$2,319 over the original amount, from \$31,669 to \$33,988 for FY07. This figure was increased after the Governor reversed the 9C cuts that had been proposed, which would have put the Formula Grant to the original FY06 amount of \$29,295. Though this money comes from several sources, the bulk of it is from tax payer money. Thank you letters - which will be sent to Governor Patrick, Senator Augustus, and Representative Polito - had been produced and were signed by the members present. All COA's across the state are planning to do this at the suggestion of MCOA.

III. Director's Comments

MySeniorCenter Software Update

The fiber optic cable is now in place. The next step is that it is to be spliced into the mechanical room. SELCO will do this. Mike Hale will follow-up with them.

MCOA is starting a working committee this month in order to help users of the *MySeniorCenter* program to network and troubleshoot with each other. This should be a support system for us once we have the software up and running. There are approximately 50 Massachusetts COA's using it already. It is also used nationwide now.

Also, the *MySeniorCenter* staff will visit to add a year's worth of updates to our system once it is up and running. They estimate that this will take a day to do. COA will be in direct contact with the *MySeniorCenter* staff for support rather than through MIS.

Mass Shape Up

Several office staff members have signed up to join the Mass Shape Up fitness program. One of Dr. Clermont's Pilates classes plans to do this as well.

CORI Update

We need to find out whether our CORI status is active or inactive. Parks and Recreation has been handling these for us. To reiterate the necessity for this, the law states that all staff and volunteers who work one-on-one and unsupervised with children, seniors, or the disabled must undergo a criminal background check. The results are received within 48-72 hours since it is all done electronically now. We do not have to pay for it - it is free for government agencies and non-profits. Re-checks should be done every 2 years as we will not be notified if a previously checked person has been convicted of an offense in the meantime. If there is a conviction, it is up to each town/organization to judge whether the particular offense is relevant to the activity to be performed (e.g. a drunk driving offense may not be relevant to a volunteer working in the kitchen, but abuse would be). The library has come up with a policy which we will adapt for our use. Theirs includes a "new employee contract" that says that the employee must voluntarily report any new conviction to the employer.

TO DO: Sharon and Michele will pursue getting themselves licensed to handle CORI's.

TO DO: COA's own CORI policy will be created.

IV. Liaison Reports

Friends

The Friends holiday party, with the singers from Shrewsbury High School, was a great success. At the next meeting on 1/16/07, Karyn Polito and Walter Rice will speak on tax breaks available to seniors. February's meeting will include a bingo party with a Mardi Gras theme.

Sign-ups for the AARP tax assistance will begin next week.

TO DO: Touch base with Jim Bishop in MIS to prepare the computer lab for AARP's arrival.

A suggestion was made to increase the Senior Center's hours with the support of the Friends. This would be similar to the way the library's Friends group sponsors their Saturday hours. The feasibility of this was questioned.

TO DO: As part of the Strategic Plan, this option's feasibility and projected cost could be studied.

Elder Services/Outreach

Though Walter has missed the past few Elder Services meetings due to a vacation and conflicts in his work schedule/outreach activities, he is still in regular communication with them. He has organized materials in his office into binders by service agency and year (2004, 2005, 2006).

TO DO: Sharon plans to do the same with the materials she keeps on file from various liaison organizations.

One of Walter's outreach activities included the Community Awareness Day at Building 19. This had been started by Spag's and continues under the same contact person, Judy Pickett. Although it is mentioned in the Building 19 flyer, it is not as heavily marketed as it was under Spag's. It happens on the 19th of each month, and a different agency is given the opportunity to be featured (have a table with its materials and contact person available). Donations can also be accepted from the public at this time. (We received approximately \$50 from Walter's appearance at the November event.) Walter, who went on both 11/19/06 and 12/19/06, choose to emphasize a different theme each time – Alzheimer's and "Holiday Blues" respectively.

TO DO: Sharon and Lillian Clifford, our newsletter volunteer, can mention this event in our own newsletter as well.

V. Old Business

Tax Work Off

We have had some new tax work off inquiries. Sharon predicts that approximately 4 spaces will become available this year. This past year's participants can now take out their money from ING since they've been "terminated" in the town's computer system.

TO DO: Marty will enlist the help of a contact at ING to facilitate the process.

TO DO: Sharon will revise the application to incorporate what was learned through this year's process.

Budget Overview Meeting

Sharon and Paul met with the Town Manager last week. Dan had no specific recommendations, but said that he will notify COA if he has any updates. They expressed their concern that with this FY 08 budget we will now be heading into the third year where the Formula Grant will be used to supplement the permanent COA's staff salaries. Historically, the Formula Grant money was used to fund the volunteer coordinator position that we would like reinstate. The danger is that the longer this money is used for other purposes, the harder it will be to reinstate the position. Dan explained that this is a difficult year to make the transition back, as he is already anticipating having to present a deficit to FinCom.

The final budget figure for the department is \$267,820.31. The cost of several line items was questioned including the monthly *MySeniorCenter* fees. However, we have not been paying them since we are not using it yet.

TO DO: Michele, who has used Access in the past, will eventually help adapt Cynthia's transportation program to better suit the current needs once she is more settled in.

VI. New Business

Art Donation & Proposal

Dom Vignola had approached Tim and John about making a sizable donation to COA for the specific purpose of sponsoring an instructor and an art program for the Independent Artists group. His original idea was to create a trust fund where the interest would be used to support this. Because there seemed to be no town precedent for this type of fund, the idea was then altered to Dom supplying COA with an annual donation to the gift account for this purpose. Board member suggestions included that either the Shrewsbury Credit Union could handle setting

up the trust or that a charitable remainder trust could be set up by a financial brokerage company. The latter would charge a fee, usually a percentage of the original deposit.

TO DO: Sharon has some leads on how to find an instructor for the project that she will pursue.

He/she will be paid like a vendor. The current plan is to try it for a 3 month period then evaluate it. Sharon had submitted a timeline in an earlier memo to those involved. An independent artists' contact (Dick or Bob) will become the leader to steer a committee through this process.

TO DO: The February newsletter will mention the program to garner interest, and it should begin in March.

Next Newsletter

The February newsletter will also announce several new activities including a dried/pressed flowers class, a bereavement support group, a grandparent support group, and ballroom dancing. Plans for a self-defense class are also in the works. It was suggested that the "fear of falling" class be repeated as it had proved to be popular.

Building Usage Vote

A vote was taken and unanimously approved for use of the senior center on a Sunday in May. The Garden Club requested its use for 5/20/07 for a silent auction/tea fundraiser. The Town Manager had also given his OK.

TO DO: Sharon will let the Garden Club know that their usage request has been approved.

FY06 Statistics

Examples of last year's Annual Town Report were handed out as well as an early draft of Sharon's departmental submission. There was some discussion on what should be included, e.g. which sets of statistics should be represented with pie charts. A suggestion was made to include more information on the senior center's use and activities; although phone calls to the center are important, they may be perceived to represent a more "passive" set of statistics rather than the more "active" set of the activities offered.

Strategic Plan

The next Strategic Plan workshop was scheduled. However, following the meeting the original date was changed to **Tuesday, 1/23/07 at 9:30AM** due to scheduling conflicts.

TO DO: Copies of the book purchased to guide this process - Creating and Implementing Your Strategic Plan: A Workbook for Public and Nonprofit Organization - will made in advance of the meeting. Board members will be contacted when they're ready to be picked up.

TO DO: A calendar will be purchased to hang in the conference room to assist in future meeting scheduling.

TO DO: Board members will bring more suggested names of people who could serve on the Strategic Plan committee to the next meeting.

VII. Other

The meeting adjourned at 11:55AM.